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Pay-Less

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Pay-Less

Josie Stitt

My mother, a public school teacher
With a passion for her students
My father, a small business owner
In the housing industry in 2008.
Two young daughters that
Played hard at recess, even harder in the yard.

My growth spurts at age 6 did not help the inevitable
Little toes began to peek from the mesh of tennis shoes.

Conversations every few months
Over the phone
From my mother to my father
Who was on his 51st hour
Of the 40-hour workweek.
Responding solemnly, "Just one more week."
Until the paychecks graced the mailbox.
Until we could undergo a trip to Pay-Less.

My mother, silently overwhelmed,
Wanted to provide for her daughters,
She dreaded the thought of her coworkers
Seeing the little toes peeking out
Of her girls' shoes
In the same elementary school she taught in.

Nothing much mattered at 4 and 6,
We didn't keep track of the day or date.
Let alone what the other teachers would think
Of little toes peeking through our tennis shoes.

Of course, my sister and I never thought twice
We would have rather been barefoot anyway.
Little toes peeking through the tennis shoes

Just meant we were that much closer to the Earth.